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and Bruce A. Young
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Applicants wish to confirm that an Information Disclosure Statement and associated papers were filed on January 31, 2002. If the Examiner cannot locate the Information Disclosure Statement in the file, it is requested that the Examiner call the undersigned attorney prior to examining the application on the merits so that a copy can be forwarded.


An early and favorable action on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Version With Markings to Show Changes Made

In the Specification:

Paragraph beginning at line 5 of page 5 has been amended as follows:

Referring now specifically to the drawings, and the illustrative ~~embodiments~~ embodiments depicted therein, a high throughput dispatch system 20 as illustrated in Fig. 3 may include a plurality of dispatch subsystems 22. The number of subsystems may be selected according to the particular application. In the illustrated embodiment, mail is sorted onto trays using conventional sorting equipment (not shown) and delivered to a merge area 24, shown in phantom, which feeds a sortation subsystem 26, also shown in phantom, which diverts individual trays of sorted mail to each dispatch subsystem 22 as well as to one or more optional manual dispatch areas 28, also shown in phantom. As will be explained in more detail below, the dispatch system 20 automatically dispatches the trays of sorted letters to conventional ERMIC or similar USPS rolling stock.

Paragraph beginning at line 14 of page 9 has been amended as follows:

Various ~~alternatives~~ alternatives are possible. For example, rather than vertically transporting containers from the spur to a subjacent cart, it is within the scope of the invention to elevate the cart with respect to the spur and transfer containers directly from the spur to the cart. While such configuration may reduce cycle time, it results in an overall increase in the height of the system. This embodiment may be desirable where ceiling ~~height~~ height is not a significant factor.

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In the claims:

Claims 1, 3-16, 19-21, and 23-30 have been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A postal dispatch system (~~20,20'~~)
which dispatches randomly arranged containers (~~94~~) of sorted mail to particular
dispatch carts (~~52~~), comprising:
a sortation conveyor (~~36,36'~~) having a main line defined by a conveying
surface, a plurality of spurs (~~44,44'~~) extending from said mail line and a
diverter mechanism (~~42,42'~~) at each of said spurs (~~44,44'~~) which selectively
diverts containers (~~94~~) from said conveying surface onto the associated one of
said spurs (~~44,44'~~); and at least one transport mechanism (~~50,50'~~) which
transports containers (~~94~~) from each of said spurs (~~44,44'~~) to a cart (~~52~~)
juxtaposed with that spur (~~44,44'~~).
3. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 2,
including another diverter mechanism (~~40~~) which diverts containers (~~94~~) from
a feed line (~~26~~) onto said conveying surface.
4. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 1,
wherein said at least one transport mechanism (~~50,50'~~) lowers containers (~~94~~)
from each of said spurs (~~44,44'~~) to a subjacent cart (~~52~~) associated with that
spur (~~44,44'~~).
5. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 1,
wherein said at least one transport mechanism (~~50,50'~~) includes a plurality of
stationary transport mechanisms (~~50,50'~~), one associated with each of said
spurs (~~44,44'~~).
6. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 1,
wherein said at least one transport mechanism (~~50,50'~~) travels between plural
ones of said spurs (~~44,44'~~).

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7. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 1,

wherein said at least one transport mechanism (~~50, 50'~~) raises a subjacent cart (~~52~~) associated with that spur (~~44, 44'~~) to the level of that spur (~~44, 44'~~) and moves containers (94) directly from the spur (~~44, 44'~~) to the cart (~~52~~).

8. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 1,

wherein said transport mechanism (~~50, 50'~~) includes an extendable support member (~~54~~) and a vertical lift (~~56~~), said extendable support member (~~54~~) is adapted to retrieving containers (94) from said at least one of said spurs (~~44, 44'~~) and inserting containers (94) to the associated cart (~~52~~) and said vertical lift (~~56~~) adapted to moving said support member (~~54~~) between the vertical level of said one of said spurs (~~44, 44'~~) and the vertical level of the associated cart (~~52~~).

9. (Amended) The system according to claim 8,

wherein said extendable support member (~~54~~) includes a plurality of fingers (~~80~~) which comb between portions of said at least one of said spurs (~~44, 44'~~) below containers (94) supported on that spur (~~44, 44'~~).

10. (Amended) The system according to claim 9,

wherein said spur (~~44, 44'~~) includes a conveying surface made up of a plurality of roller members (90) and wherein said fingers (~~80~~) comb between said roller members (90).

11. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 9,

wherein said vertical lift (~~56~~) elevates said fingers (~~80~~) upwardly in order to retrieve a container (94) from said one of said spurs (~~44, 44'~~) and elevates said fingers (~~80~~) downwardly in order to insert a container (94) to the associated cart (~~52~~).

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12. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 8,
wherein said extendable support member (54) is extended according to a
controlled acceleration profile.
13. (Amended) The system according to claim 12,
wherein said extendable support member (54) is extended by a variable
frequency motor.
14. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 8,
wherein said vertical lift (56) is servo controlled.
15. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 1,
including a plurality of said transport mechanisms (50, 50'),
wherein each of said transport mechanisms (50, 50') is inhibited from
operation when a cart (52) serviced by that transport mechanism (50, 50') is
being replaced.
16. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 15,
wherein other transport mechanisms (50, 50') are not inhibited from operation
when one of said transport mechanisms (50, 50') is inhibited from operation.
19. (Twice Amended) The system according to according to claim 1,
wherein each of said diverters (42) is a pop-up diverter.
20. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 1,
wherein said spurs (44, 44') are arranged on both sides of said conveying
surface and wherein each of said diverters (42) is bidirectional.

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21. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 1,
including an alignment device (102) positioned adjacent each of said carts (52)
which aligns containers (94) being inserted to the associated cart (52).
23. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 9,
wherein said fingers (80) are extendable horizontally in order to engage a
container (94).
24. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 9,
wherein said extendable support member (54) further includes a stripper
member (76) extendable horizontally independently of said fingers (80) in
order to slide containers (94) off of said fingers (80).
25. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 1,
including a plurality of cart areas each having an enclosure (96) with a
movable gate (98) that can be selectively opened to allow other carts (52) in
other cart areas to be loaded while one cart (52) is being removed.
26. (Amended) A method of dispatching randomly ordered containers (94) of sorted
mail to carts (52), comprising:
sorting containers (94) to particular locations, each associated with a cart (52);
and transporting containers (94) between each of said particular locations and
the associated cart (52).
27. (Amended) The method according to claim 26,
wherein said transporting includes accumulating a layer of containers (94) at a
particular location and transporting said layer between that location and the
associated cart (52).

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28. (Amended) The method according to claim 27,

wherein said accumulating a layer includes accumulating a row of containers
(94) at said particular location, shifting the row of containers and accumulating
another row of containers (94) at said particular location.

29. (Twice Amended) The method according to claim 26,

wherein said sorting containers includes
providing a sortation conveyor (36, 36') having a main line defined by a
conveying surface and a plurality of spurs (44, 44') positioned along said main
line and further includes diverting containers (94) from said conveying surface
to spurs (44, 44') at said particular locations.

30. (Twice Amended) The method according to claim 26,

wherein said transporting containers (94) includes positioning an associated
cart (52) below the associated location and causing relative movement
between containers (94) at the particular location and the associated cart (52).